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Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership

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Your Ref: 14/02184/FUL
Our Ref: ph_040614_14_02184 Wenlock Edge Inn

4 June 2014

Dear Heather

14/02184/FUL Erection of two tourist accommodation blocks with meeting room; creation of parking areas; demolition of derelict outbuilding; change of use of outbuilding (letting room) to site shop; installation of sewage treatment plant, Wenlock Edge Inn, Easthope, Much Wenlock, TF13 6DJ

The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application.

Wenlock Edge is an iconic feature of the Shropshire Hills AONB and a very important location for visitors. Travelling south along the Edge from Much Wenlock, this location is particularly significant in landscape terms as being the first real place where the landscape and views open out to the west of the road, and this is made all the more valuable by the presence of industrial development further north along the Edge. The location of the two proposed accommodation blocks on this undeveloped west side of the road would compromise this quality to a significant degree.

The AONB Partnership supports a sustainable approach to tourism in the AONB. We consider that there is scope to develop further facilities for the Inn on the eastern side of the road in proximity to the existing buildings, which if suitably designed and scaled could be accommodated without detriment to the landscape quality. We therefore recommend the current application is refused, and we consider that the following relevant policies support this position:

National Planning Policy Framework :

115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

Shropshire Core Strategy

CS16: Tourism, Culture and Leisure (extract)

To deliver high quality, sustainable tourism, and cultural and leisure development, which enhances the vital role that these sectors play for the local economy, benefits local communities and visitors, and is sensitive to Shropshire's intrinsic natural and built environment qualities, emphasis will be placed on:

Supporting new and extended tourism development, and cultural and leisure facilities, that are appropriate to their location, and enhance and protect the existing offer within Shropshire. (emphasis added)

Cont'd

Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan, Pre-Submission Draft (Final Plan) Shropshire Council 17/3/2014

Policy MD2 Sustainable Design, Explanation (extract)

For development affecting the Shropshire Hills AONB, particular regard should be paid to the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan and supplementary guidance. (emphasis added)

Policy MD11 - Tourism facilities and visitor accommodation

1. Tourism, leisure and recreation development proposals that require a countryside location will be permitted where the proposal complements the character and qualities of the site's immediate surroundings, and meets the requirements in Policies CS5, CS16, MD7, MD12, MD13 and relevant local and national guidance;
2. All proposals should be well screened and sited to mitigate the impact on the visual quality of the area through the use of natural on-site features, site layout and design, and landscaping and planting schemes where appropriate. **Proposals within and adjoining the Shropshire Hills AONB should pay particular regard to landscape impact and mitigation. (emphasis added)**

Explanations (extract)

4.108 In areas of recognised scenic and environmental value proposals must pay particular regard to the qualities of the area and the reasons for designation in line with Policies CS6 and CS17, MD12, MD13 and the NPPF. **Within and adjoining the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty applicants should also have regard to guidance in the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan. Sustainable tourism development plays a vital role in supporting the local economy but must be sensitive to the inherent qualities that the AONB is designated for; (emphasis added)**

Policy MD12: The Natural Environment (extract)

In accordance with Policies CS6, CS17 and through applying the guidance in the Natural Environment SPD, the conservation, enhancement and restoration of Shropshire's natural assets will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that the social or economic benefits of development can be demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm to natural assets where proposals are likely to have an unavoidable significant adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on any of the following:
 - i. **the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB;**

Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan

Valuing the AONB in Planning and Decisions – Management Plan Policies

Protection of the AONB

In line with national and local authority planning policies, the AONB has the highest standards of protection for landscape and natural beauty and the purposes of designation should be given great weight in planning decisions, also taking into account the statutory AONB Management Plan.

Supporting Enjoyment and a Visitor Economy in Harmony with the AONB – Management Plan Policies

Tourism and recreation development and infrastructure (extract)

The siting, design and specification of new developments for tourism and recreation should be to high standards of environmental sensitivity and sustainability.

Yours sincerely

Phil Holden
Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Manager